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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

( ) Release (X) Excise ( ) Deny

Exemption(s): B1, NR

Declassify: (X) In Part ( ) In Full

(X) Classify as C ( ) Extend as    ( ) Downgrade to   

Date 5/23/01 Declassify on 5/3/11 Reason 25X6

INR WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS  
OF DEVELOPMENTS IN HUMAN RIGHTS

No. 100, April 6, 1979

EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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LATIN AMERICA

Argentina  
Rights Update for 1979

Abductions. There has been a sharp drop in the number of abductions reported to our Embassy and to human rights groups. Nine have been reported for January and none for either February or March. These figures, according to the Embassy, tend to confirm numerous reports that the government has ordered a halt to abductions and disbanded several counterterrorist units.

Prisoner Treatment. According to a senior Ministry of Interior source, the government will soon issue a uniform code of conduct and treatment covering all criminal and political prisoners. (INR Note: [ ] sources have consistently pointed to the absence of such a code as one of the sources of prisoner mistreatment.)

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Reducing PEN Roles. An Interior Ministry official stated to an Embassy officer his intent to reduce the number of executive (PEN) prisoners to 1,800 by the time the visit of the Inter-American Human Rights Commission (IAHRC), scheduled for May 28-June 9, takes place. Published figures show a net release of 184 individuals from PEN status between January 1 and March 25 (208 removed; 24 added), leaving the Embassy's count of acknowledged executive detainees at 2,689.

Juridical Activity. Two important 1979 Supreme Court actions have encouraged human rights advocates. In one case, the Court ordered the Army to return to judicial custody an Army NCO who had been under civilian detention for threatening a civilian with his pistol; the Army complied. In the other case, the Court for the first time ordered a lower court to investigate a disappearance case that was the subject of a habeas corpus writ.

Prisoner Mistreatment. February produced three cases of alleged prisoner mistreatment. According to reports from other prisoners, one person disappeared from prison and has not been relocated; another was taken from his cell and tortured while being interrogated; and a third died as a result of beatings by guards. B1  
disappe  
place

Groups Targeted by Security Agents. Reports reaching the Embassy reveal that two groups have been the object of consistent security force attention since late 1978. They are the Relatives of Persons Detained and Disappeared for Political Reasons (linked to the Argentine Communist Party) and the Socialist Workers' Party (PST). Thus far, however, members of the two groups who have been abducted by security forces can be accounted for, i.e., none is listed as "disappeared." (CONFIDENTIAL, Buenos Aires 2501, March 30)

INR Comment. Insofar as there have been positive signs in human rights developments they can be partially attributed to the Videla government's desire to soften what it knows will be highly negative IAHRC findings.

## Chile

Supreme Court Orders Special Investigation Into Missing Persons. The Chilean Supreme Court ordered five regional judges on March 21 to name special investigating judges to look into cases of missing persons and instructed six other circuits to concentrate attention on specific disappearances. The ruling, couched in careful terms, responded to a November 1978 petition by Catholic Church officials regarding 618 individual cases.

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